

Message Text

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72

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10 LAB-06

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 L-03 NSC-10

PA-04 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 AID-20 PC-04

OMB-01 TRSE-00 DRC-01 /143 W
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R 051853Z FEB 73

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2164

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 0770

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PINS, BL

SUBJECT: STRAINS IN THE MINERS FEDERATION

REFERENCE: LA PAZ 613

1. MINERS IN CATAVI AND SIGLO DECLARED A 48-HOUR STRIKE FEBRUARY 1 TO PROTEST THE LACK OF BASIC FOODS IN THE COMIBOL COMMISSARIES. LEADERS OF THESE UNIONS ALSO ATTACKED THE MINERS FEDERATION (FSTMB) FOR SIGNING WAGE SETTLEMENTS WITH COMIBOL (LA PAZ 613) DESCRIBING THE 25 PERCENT WAGE INCREASE AS INSUFFICIENT.

2. FSTMB LEADERS EXPLAINED IN CONFIDENCE TO LABATT THAT LEADERS FROM CATAVI, SIGLO XX AND SAN JOSE HAD OPPOSED THE SETTLEMENT BUT WERE VOTED DOWN BY A MAJORITY OF DELEGATES FROM THE ENTIRE NATIONALIZED MINING SECTOR.

3. FSTMB LEADERS ASCRIBE OPPOSITION TO THE SETTLEMENT AND THE CURRENT STRIKES TO DIFFERENCES IN POLITICAL STRATEGY BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND FAR LEFT LEADERSHIP (TROTSKYITE, PEKING) IN THE MINES MENTIONED. FAR LEFTISTS BELIEVE THAT BANZER'S DAYS ARE NUMBERED AND THAT NOW IS THE TIME TO MAXIMIZE PRESSURE ON HIM. FSTMS LEADERS BELIEVE THAT WHILE BANZER MAY BE SHAKY, THERE IS NO CHANCE OF DRIVING THE MILITARY FROM POWER. THE FSTMB BELIEVES
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THAT IF BANZER WERE OUSTED, HE WOULD BE REPLACED BY SOME OTHER

OFFICER AND THE CHANCES ARE THAT THAT OFFICER WOULD BE "EVEN WORSE THAN BANZER" FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE WORKING CLASS. THE FSTMB THEREFORE PREFERS TO SIT OUT THE CURRENT WAVE OF TENSIONS AND AVOID GIVING ANYONE AN EXCUSE TO CLOSE DOWN THE FEDERATION. AS TIME HAS PASSED, FSTMB LEADERS FEEL BANZER'S CHANCES OF SURVIVAL HAVE IMPROVED SIGNIFICANTLY AND THAT THE FSTMB STRATEGY HAS BEEN VINDICATED.

4. COMMENT: THE UNIONS IN CATAVI, SIGLO XX AND SAN JOSE REPRESENT A SIGNIFICANT MINORITY OF THE FSTMB. THEIR DEFIANCE REPRESENTS AN IMPORTANT CHALLENGE TO SECCRETARY GENERAL VICTOR LOPEZ AND HIS POLICY OF DEEMPHASIZING THE POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF THE FSTMB IN FAVOR OF OBTAINING IMPROVED WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS FOR THE MINERS. STEDMAN

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Message Attributes

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